

South Dakota State University

Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange

SDSU Extension Circulars

SDSU Extension

2-1979

Planning and Holding Productive Meetings

Arnold J. Bateman

Follow this and additional works at: https://openprairie.sdstate.edu/extension_circ

Recommended Citation

Bateman, Arnold J., "Planning and Holding Productive Meetings" (1979). *SDSU Extension Circulars*. 882. https://openprairie.sdstate.edu/extension_circ/882

This Circular is brought to you for free and open access by the SDSU Extension at Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in SDSU Extension Circulars by an authorized administrator of Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange. For more information, please contact michael.biondo@sdstate.edu.

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



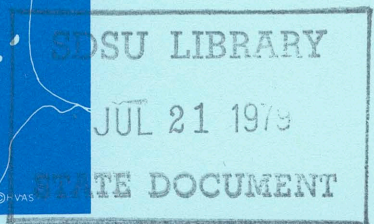
For current policies and practices, contact SDSU Extension

Website: extension.sdstate.edu

Phone: 605-688-4792

Email: sdsu.extension@sdstate.edu

SDSU Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer in accordance with the nondiscrimination policies of South Dakota State University, the South Dakota Board of Regents and the United States Department of Agriculture.



EC 724

Planning and Holding Productive Meetings

Cooperative Extension Service
South Dakota State University
U.S. Department of Agriculture



30.732
87.17
724 c.3

South Dakota State University
Cooperative Extension Service Publications
Leadership Series

EC 723, Organizational objectives

EC 724, Planning and holding productive
meetings

EC 725, Effective use of committees

EC 726, Decision making and problem solving

EC 727, Motivation in voluntary organi-
zations

EC 728, Communications

Planning and Holding Productive Meetings

Arnold J. Bateman
Extension rural development specialist

The success of a meeting usually depends on the person or persons who plan and preside at it. These people know when and when not to call a meeting, how to plan, organize, and conduct meetings, and how to achieve productive results.

They learned these skills, and you can too.

Productive meetings require work and a strong commitment in terms of preparation, objectivity, decisiveness, management, and follow up.

Many of the people you want at your meeting would rather not come. A meeting is an inconvenience; it interferes with what they are doing or would prefer to do.

You have to deal with at least four kinds of people:

1. The "meeting maker" sees meetings as a solution to everything. His or her main objective is to organize and play the leading role in one meeting after another.
2. The "meeting minder" constantly hurries from one meeting to another week after week.
3. The "meeting moaner" feels forced to come to the meeting and thinks that all meetings are, at best, a necessary evil.
4. The "meeting misser" is the one who gets invited but manages to avoid most meetings with great regularity.

Fortunately, there is another kind of participant. This is the person that selects meetings well, makes a valuable contribution, and benefits from having attended the meeting.

Meetings can be a high-risk activity. Confrontations and disagreements are common, since meetings involve people brought together to discuss and make decisions. (See EC 726, "Decision making and problem solving.")

As the meeting manager, you can not guarantee a motivated, cooperative, and knowledgeable group. Nevertheless, you can make sure that those items under your direct control -- such as preparation, management, and follow up -- are well planned and executed.

Why do you want to call a meeting?

Before organizing any meeting you need to ask yourself the following questions: Is there a real need for a meeting? What do I hope to accomplish with this meeting? What is the purpose of the meeting? What are the short-term and long-term results I am looking for? What action or reaction do I hope to create?

When do I call a meeting?^a

1. To define organizational goals.
2. To receive reports from participants.
3. To reach a group judgment as the basis for a decision.
4. To discover, analyze, or solve a problem.
5. To gain acceptability for an idea, program, or decision.
6. To achieve a training objective.
7. To teach personnel to organize their thoughts and materials and clearly

^aSource: Ag Gro Pac resource material, Purdue University.

define goals in their meeting presentations.

#37299554
8. To reconcile conflicting views.

9. To provide essential information for work guidance, or for the relief of insecurities or tensions.
10. To assure equal understanding of organization policy, methods, or decisions.
11. To foster new ideas.
12. To coordinate group work activities.
13. To obtain immediate reaction when speedy response to a problem is important.
14. To have an excuse for taking up a matter which has gotten stalled.
15. To advance the course of management, to run the organization.

When don't I call a meeting?

1. When other communications, such as telephone, letter, memo, etc., will produce the desired results.
2. When there is not sufficient time for adequate preparation by participants or meeting leader.
3. When one or more key participants are not available.
4. When time is not right.
5. When the meeting is not likely to produce satisfactory results in view of clashing personalities or larger management strategy.
6. When, in view of costs of meeting, net return is not likely to be realized.

Planning the meeting

Even professional organizers sometimes trip up on definitions of the words

they use so glibly. If they can not agree on basic definitions, think how much harder it is for voluntary or occasional group leaders.

So, when planning a meeting, make sure you all speak the language. "Planning" is a good place to start.

1. Planning: Thinking into the future, designing specific activities toward achieving thought-out objectives.
2. Objectives: Long-range, broad statements of direction.
3. Goals: Short-range, specific, time oriented reference points by which you can see how well you are achieving your objectives.
4. Policy: Statements to guide action, plans, programs.
5. Procedures: Step-by-step descriptions of how to perform a job or function.
6. Practices: Courses of action established on a recurring basis.
7. Program: Specific who, when, how, what, where something is to be done.

If your organization has no written objectives, you have a perfect subject for your next meeting! (See EMC 723, "Organizational objectives," for help.)

Then develop your subsequent meetings around those goals. The meeting "moaners" and "missers" will fall away; your organization will have a livelier and more productive membership.

The meeting agenda

The agenda, if organized and used properly, is a road map to help you through the meeting process.

1. For the organization the agenda makes it easier to:

- a. Expedite effective production.
 - b. Protect from introduction of items which do not meet the purpose of a particular meeting.
 - c. Protect from introduction of items the group is not ready to discuss.
 - d. Give order and direction to the group's work.
 - e. Indicate relationship of items.
2. For the leader, the agenda can help to:
- a. Plan the work to be done.
 - b. Allot the available time to necessary items.
 - c. Set an open or workable atmosphere.
 - d. Give an opportunity to distribute leadership in the group.
 - e. Provide a meeting plan satisfactory to the group.
 - f. Gain acceptance as a member of the group.
 - g. Establish bounds for discussion.
3. For the member, the agenda can help to:
- a. Provide opportunity to bring pertinent items before the group.
 - b. Serve as a guide for participation.
 - c. Offer opportunity to plan on the team.
 - d. Show the relationship of parts.
 - e. Be better prepared to participate, if circulated before the meeting.

Even with an agenda, the group may still have to sort out priorities to avoid running the meeting overtime, not getting through the agenda, or rushing through everything without enough time for important items.

There are some basic steps you can use to avoid such problems. Get suggestions for agenda items in any way that works--by mail, phone, or at a planning meeting itself.

Any proposed agenda item should indicate the time needed and any resources that will be needed.

After the deadline date for submitting topics, the agenda is made up, subject to approval by the president or chairperson.

When putting the agenda together, follow these guidelines: list items in order to be taken up, indicate the time needed for each item, suggest committee decisions where needed, mail tentative agenda out to members, and then finalize the agenda at the beginning of the meeting.

Hints for conducting a meeting

There are five basic parts in a productive meeting.

1. Opening

Begin on time! Put everyone at ease; get them acquainted with each other if the group is small enough. The meeting manager needs to state the purpose of the meeting and define the ground rules.

2. Presentation of topics

Each item that is to be discussed at the meeting should be reviewed by giving pertinent background information and stating the facts.

Use visual aids, charts, case studies, demonstrations, or anything that will make it easier for participants to grasp the situation quickly.

3. Conduct of meeting

A good meeting manager will control the discussion, not letting personal feelings cause conflict or allow individuals to dominate. He needs to encourage participation, keep the discussion on track, and summarize frequently by analyzing and restating the views expressed.

There are many ways to get people's involvement and input at a meeting. Try

going around the room and getting each person's ideas. Ask for responses generally and frequently, or call a person by name and ask for reactions. In the case of one who is always opposed to change, ask him or her, "What do you suggest, then?"

4. Close of meeting

This is the time to recap what has happened. Summarize the main points of the meeting, explain what has been accomplished in terms of meeting purposes, and announce the follow up. Thank the participants for their contribution and finish on a positive statement. Close the meeting on time. This is very important.

5. Follow up

Effective follow up is essential to the success of both this and the next meeting. Everyone who has been given an assignment needs to agree on it and understand what it is. People who are to follow up on assignments need to have the authority delegated to them to do so. After the meeting minutes are prepared, send each person a copy with his assignment clearly marked as a remainder of his commitment.

The following worksheet can assist you in organizing and preparing for meetings; it helps to write things down! Feel free to duplicate the sheet for each meeting you conduct.

Worksheet Number 1

Meeting Productivity-Evaluation Sheet

Items	Check Quality That Best Describes				
	5	4	3	2	1
	Fully Adequate	Needs Some Improvement	Needs Much Improvement	Practically Absent	Does Not Exist
1. Meeting Purpose					
2. Agenda					
3. Reports					
4. Proper Use of Committees					
5. Reference Materials					
6. Regular Attendance					
7. Suitable Time, Place and Equipment					
8. Conducting of Meeting					
9. Staying With Agenda					
10. Group Participation					
11. Making Sound Decisions					
12. Feeling of Achievement					
Others					
Column Totals					
Total Score					

*Adapted From Ag Gro Pac Purdue University

EC 724

PLANNING AND HOLDING PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the USDA. Hollis D. Hall, Director of CES, SDSU, Brookings. Educational programs and materials offered without regard to age, race, color, sex, religion, handicap, or national origin. An Equal Opportunity Employer. File: 5.4-1--1,500 printed at estimated 14¢ each--2-79mb--3665A.